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91st plenary meeting
Friday, 15 April 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

*President*: Mr. Lykketoft ..... (Denmark)

*The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m.*

**Agenda item 113** (*continued*)

**Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections**

**(b) Election of thirty members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law**

**The President**: Members will recall that, at its 50th plenary meeting, on 9 November 2015, the General Assembly elected the following 23 States as members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law for a six-year term of office beginning on 27 June 2016: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, the Czech Republic, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Mauritius, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, Spain, Thailand, Turkey, the United States of America and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Therefore, those 23 States are not eligible for election.

Members will also recall that there remain six seats to be filled from among the Group of African States and one seat from the Asia-Pacific States.

I should like to remind members that, as of 27 June 2016, the following States will continue to be represented on the Commission: Armenia, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Hungary, Indonesia, Japan, Kuwait, Liberia, Malaysia, Mauritania, Mexico, Namibia, Panama, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Zambia. Therefore, those 30 States are not eligible for election.

The General Assembly will now proceed to the election of five members to replace those members whose terms of office will expire on 26 June 2016.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, the election shall be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations. However, I should like to recall paragraph 16 of decision 34/401, whereby the practice of dispensing with the secret ballot for elections to subsidiary organs when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled should become standard unless a delegation specifically requests a vote on a given election.

In the absence of such a request, may I take it that the Assembly decides to proceed to this election on the basis of dispensing with the secret ballot?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: With regard to candidatures, I should like to inform members that, for the six seats from among the Group of African States, the Group has endorsed Kenya, Lesotho, Libya, Nigeria and Uganda.

Since the number of candidates for the group is equal to or less than the number of seats to be filled by the Group, may I take it that the General Assembly wishes to declare Kenya, Lesotho, Libya, Nigeria and Uganda elected for a six-year term of office beginning on 27 June 2016?

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*It was so decided.*

**The President**: I congratulate Kenya, Lesotho, Libya, Nigeria and Uganda, which have been elected members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law.

With regard to the one remaining vacancy from among the Group of African States and the one remaining vacancy from the Group of Asia-Pacific States, the General Assembly will hold elections upon notification by interested Member States from those two regions.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 113.

**Agenda item 13** (*continued*)

**Improving global road safety**

**Note by the Secretary-General (A/70/386)**

**Draft resolution (A/70/L.44)**

**The President**: I should now like to consult with Member States with a view to giving the floor to Mr. Jean Todt, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Road Safety. If there is no objection, may I take it that the General Assembly wishes, without setting a precedent, to invite Mr. Todt to make a statement at this meeting?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: In accordance with the decision just taken, I now give the floor to Mr. Todt.

**Mr. Todt** (*spoke in French*): I acknowledge the important honour conferred upon me to address the General Assembly at its seventieth session in my capacity as the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety. It is therefore my duty and responsibility to raise a certain number of alarming and disturbing issues here in the Hall, because they force all of us to question ourselves. Those questions relate to the cause for which, alongside others, I have been waging a fierce battle for many years now. I am speaking about the fight against the dangers of the road or, diplomatically speaking, the fight for road safety.

First, why and how can we speak about this silent killer? It is such a terrible scourge that we generally prefer to speak of it as seldom as possible. I might recall the terrifying statistics — unfortunately, well-known ones that are mentioned in draft resolution A/70/L.44, to be introduced shortly by the representative of the Russian Federation, who should be commended. However, as time is short, I shall limit myself, during the five minutes allotted to me, that 12 people are killed on roads every five minutes, 480 will suffer injuries of varying severity, and two children will die. We accordingly ask why is there silence. I do not really have an answer.

There is of course no hierarchy or ranking of catastrophes and their victims, and no one can or should keep such a macabre tally. I will therefore not attempt to do so. However, how can we avoid asking ourselves why that double standard exists? Why is there such resignation? Why is there such fatalism, for which we are all responsible? Would our awareness be greater if, instead of speaking in years, I were to speak in decades? In so we would need to say that every 10 years there are 13 million deaths on the roads, half a billion people injured and approximately 2 million children killed. Furthermore, those statistics do not take into account the growth and increasing mobility of the population.

What better forum exists than the General Assembly in which to speak out and to remember that road safety is also a problem of solidarity and development and one that urbanization and motorization — which will be addressed at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development in Quito — will only increase and worsen if we do not act. The disparities among countries are also striking. The less advanced and the middle-income countries, with 82 per cent of the global population and 54 per cent of licenced vehicles, account for 90 per cent of fatalities on the roads, while the others, the high-income countries, with 18 per cent of the population and 46 per cent of vehicles, account for 10 per cent of the fatalities. I give yet one last statistic: the cost of road accidents and their consequences is estimated at approximately $500 billion per year. It does not take much imagination to consider what such an enormous sum of money could be used for.

How can we then accept that the sums allocated to fighting this global scourge and veritable killer are so miserly and so small as to be almost ridiculous? In fact, I am talking about only a few tens of millions of dollars. That is right; everyone heard correctly: only a few tens of millions of dollars. And that is when campaigns against other global scourges — and I am genuinely happy for them — have several tens of billions of dollars at their disposal to fight those scourges. One

again, one must wonder why there is such a difference and why there is such a gap?

The draft resolution that will soon be introuced will — I hope — enable concrete advances to be made, because nothing decisive or effective can be undertaken without substantial financial resources. Accordingly, I would like to stress the importance of paragraph 20 of the draft resolution and the progress that could result from it. It will therefore be one of the priorities of my efforts during the second year of my tenure as Special Envoy to try to bring about the establishment and financing of the United Nations global fund for road safety called for by the draft resolution.

There is another question that I would like to ask. While the United Nations and its specialized agencies are mobilizing and 58 conventions have already been drawn up within the framework of the United Nations, why, in a certain number of countries, are vehicles that do not observe basic safety standards still being built? What is even more worrying is that those vehicles are built in the same factories, often on a neighbouring assembly line under the same roof, as those that strictly adhere to safety standards, because those cars are being built for export. What accounts for those deliberate disparities? The list of reasons could go on. The same issues apply to road construction — compliance with the laws, security standards and the installation of road signs and so on.

I would like to conclude by emphasizing the importance of road safety education. In the third millennium we need to have every child learn not only to write, read and count, but also to move around as a pedestrian, motorcyclist, motorbiker and future driver. That is a major goal, but one so easy to achieve. Imagine just one hour a week dedicated to education on mobility. That would mark significant progress. How many victims would be spared if we did so? In the General Assembly we must recall that in 1948 the Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 3 of which stipulates that

> "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."

The right to life is what is referred to above all, hence this is what we are fighting for. Let us not forget, at least for those millions of people who are casualties of road accidents.

**The President**: I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation to introduce draft resolution A/70/L.44.

**Mr. Kononuchenko** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Improving road safety is a priority for most countries in the world. During the years of the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020, significant results have been made in reducing the number of traffic accidents. The inclusion of this topic in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) offers us a possibility to consider this issue not just in terms of the loss of human life, but also as an element of sustainable development in all its three dimensions, namely, economic, social and environmental.

We are greatly honoured to introduce draft resolution A/70/L.44, entitled "Improving global road safety." Based on the relevance of the provisions of the resolutions of previous years, draft resolution A/70/L.44 reflects new elements of the long-term strategy in the field of road safety, including the appointment of a Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Road Safety and the adoption of the Brasilia Declaration on Road Safety at the second Global High-Level Conference on Road Safety, and also notes key milestones for further efforts to mitigate the negative consequences of road traffic accidents. I will mention just the most important of those.

First, the draft resolution calls for developing and strengthening partnerships with the participation of States and international organizations, including the agencies of the United Nations system, civil society and the private sector, in order to improve the situation on roads. As one of the mechanisms that will facilitate the pooling and coordination of efforts, draft resolution A/70/L.44 and takes note of such a consultative mechanism as the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration.

Secondly, the draft resolution aims at the creation of a road safety trust fund that could be an additional instrument of financial support and a catalyst for attracting investments for the implementation of road safety programmes.

Thirdly, the draft resolution invites the relevant organizations, including the World Health Organization and the regional economic commissions, first and foremost the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, to provide further assistance to interested States on improving the normative legal framework

and road safety technical standards, as well as on the development of further targeted indicators of the major risk factors in that sphere.

The inclusion in the draft resolution of the following references is also significant: the upcoming third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, the World Health Organization Global Conference on Health Promotion and events as part of the fourth United Nations Global Road Safety Week.

Given that the entire 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is dedicated to the theme of no one being left behind, it was important to focus on the most vulnerable groups in the field of ensuring road safety, namely, children and persons with disabilities.

We note that the negotiations took place in a constructive manner and with the participation of all stakeholders. Allow us to express our gratitude to delegations for their active participation in the agreement. In particular, I would like to single out our colleagues from the Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations for their valuable contribution. We call on all Member States to support draft resolution A/70/L.44 and invite them to become co-sponsors.

**The President**: I now call on the observer of the European Union.

**Mr. Parenti** (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States.

The EU and its member States welcome draft resolution A/70/L.44, entitled "Improving global road safety." In particular, we would like to thank the Russian Federation for its leadership and efforts to facilitate this outcome.

In 2015 in Europe 26,000 people died on the roads, the equivalent of a middle-sized town. Worldwide, road-traffic deaths accounted for more than 1.2 million persons, which would compare to the population of the ninth most-populated city of the United States. Fifty million people a year are injured because of road traffic crashes. Road traffic crashes are a leading cause of death globally and are the main cause of death among people aged between 15 and 29 years. That is unacceptable, and shows that our road transport systems around the world are inherently unsafe and that one single human mistake can end up in a catastrophe for individuals, families and societies.

Europe has taken a clear stand on this major health problem. According to our white paper on transport, by 2050 Europe is to move close to zero fatalities in road transport — a clear vision that will not be achieved overnight. A system of intermediate targets and safety indicators is needed in order to guide our efforts along the way. Based on that, we agreed on the Sustainable Development Goals in September 2015 and its target 3.6, which is to halve the global number of deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes by 2020. In that context, the Brasilia Declaration on Road Safety, adopted at the second Global High-level Conference on Road Safety, held in November 2015, and draft resolution A/70/L.44, entitled "Improving global road safety", represent clear and recent illustrations of the continuous international efforts to achieve our difficult goals.

To prevent road traffic injuries and to develop a safe road transport system, we need a comprehensive and holistic approach with the involvement of all stakeholders. The EU road safety policy framework 2011-2020, which is guiding our efforts towards contributing to safer roads, is a good example. The framework focuses on new key priorities, such as reducing accidents on rural roads and on vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists, children and elderly people. In addition, we built on previous commitments including, among others, strengthening controls and penalties; supporting initiatives at the national level to combat driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol; investing in road infrastructure and improving traffic conditions; and improving legislation on driving licences and standards of fitness for driving. Such measures resulted in reducing road fatalities by 17 per cent between 2011 and 2015.

But even if the regional road fatality rate in the EU is the lowest worldwide, it remains unacceptable. We need to continue to share best practices and exchange information at the national, regional and global levels, with the active participation of civil society and the private sector. We also need to strengthen our efforts to integrate safety into the broader agenda of sustainable cities and transport. We know the main killers on the roads: speeding, drunk-driving and the failure to wear a seat belt. To make roads safer, work is needed on safer road infrastructure, on safer vehicles and on safer road users. That includes the implementation and enforcement of adequate laws, but also soft measures such as awareness-raising and educational efforts.

Although road traffic injuries are a major public-health problem and the challenges sometimes feel overwhelming, there is hope. Many countries around the world have already shown that it is possible, through a holistic and multisectoral approach, to prevent people from getting killed or seriously injured in road traffic. Let us build on those experiences. We cannot afford to be complacent about road safety; millions of human lives are at stake.

**Mr. Ba Omar** (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): I deliver this statement on behalf of the Permanent Representative of Oman, who unfortunately was unable to be with us.

On behalf of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman, I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report (A/70/386) on the efforts made to improve safety on roads worldwide. The report provides information on the latest actions by States to implement the recommendations of General Assembly resolutions relating to improving road safety. I would also like to commend the constructive efforts by the international community in that area.

Oman was a pioneer in launching the campaign on road safety at the international level. Oman proposed inscribing the item on road safety on the Organization's agenda for the sake of future generations. After the General Assembly first included the issue of road safety on its agenda, on 23 May 2003 the Assembly adopted resolution 57/309, which the Sultanate of Oman had introduced based on our belief in the importance of road safety worldwide. Having highlighted the tragedy of unnecessary deaths and accidents due to inadequate road safety precautions, the General Assembly subsequently adopted several other resolutions on road safety. A number of ministerial-level meetings were held in order to draw attention to the deaths resulting from traffic accidents, to encourage the building of safer roads and to offer technical support for safety on roads at the regional and international levels.

Since road safety is now one of the important items on the United Nations agenda and on those of other organizations, the international community has been giving the utmost priority to working with the various stakeholders to reduce the negative impact of the lack of road safety. Approximately 1 million people are killed annually, and nearly 50 million severely injured, due to traffic accidents on the world's roads — creating great pressure on the international community.

The Government of Oman has been making great efforts to improve road safety. We have issued a decree to establish the National Committee for Road Safety, aimed at elaborating a comprehensive strategy to reduce traffic accidents, deal with their negative impact and take into account related problems. The strategy will set the foundation to respect international standards in building safe roads. As for awareness efforts, we have worked to improve reporting statistics on a weekly basis. We are also collaborating with the mass media and issuing more than 100 awareness newsletters each year, distributing them to distant regions in the Sultanate, targeting university and other students and the community at large. We are launching documentaries to raise awareness about the importance of road safety. Some of those films have received international awards. In order to introduce new generations to road safety, we have established a traffic school for children, which is actually a comprehensive mini-city that introduces pupils to road-safety standards and laws. We are also training police officers and the various road users on road safety. In addition, at the beginning of April, the Oman Liquefied Natural Gas Company launched a project entitled a Gift to the Nation, which aims to reduce road accidents by setting up a traffic safety institute in Sur province.

The efforts made by my Government and our private sector and the improved awareness in our society have made it possible for Oman to achieve positive results in reducing accidents on our roads. Statistics indicate that the number of deaths on our roads have decreased by 50 per cent, and injuries by 30 per cent, since 2012, in spite of a 25 per cent increase in the number of registered vehicles on our roads.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our appreciation to you, Mr. President, and to the Secretary-General. We assure the General Assembly that we are committed to improving international efforts to achieve greater safety on roads and to work together to achieve our common goal.

**Mr. De Aguiar Patriota** (Brazil): I commend the Russian Federation for introducing the draft resolution on road safety and for facilitating the negotiations over the past few weeks. I would also like to thank the Sultanate of Oman and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Jean Todt, for their leadership. And I welcome the report of the Secretary-General.

In November, Brazil had the honour to host the second Global High-level Conference on Road Safety. The Conference, co-sponsored by the World Health Organization with the support of many other players, including the Economic Commission for Europe and other United Nations regional commissions, welcomed to Brasilia 2,200 participants in a truly multi-stakeholder fashion. The outcome document of the Conference, the Brasilia Declaration on Road Safety, was drafted through an inclusive negotiation process and is expected to be endorsed by the General Assembly today. In doing so, the United Nations will align its guidelines and actions on road safety with a transformative paradigm of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1).

Among other things, road safety is a question of development, equality and sustainability and of how we interact in the public sphere with our common and shared space. It relates to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 very directly — which is to ensure healthy lives and to promote well-being for all at all ages — but also with SDG 11, which reminds us to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Sustainable public-transport policies should be at the core of road safety concerns. Most of the victims are in developing countries; more than half of them are not automobile users. They are pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and, more broadly, the still-uncertain number of people who use unsafe transportation systems. Vulnerable populations such as women, children and persons with disabilities should receive special attention in this regard.

I would like to highlight the importance of the mandate to be given by the General Assembly to the World Health Organization to work with Member States on global voluntary targets for key risk factors such as drinking and driving, speeding and failing to use motorcycle helmets, seat belts and child restraints, as well as for service-delivery mechanisms. This work is instrumental to achieving the ambitious SDG targets for road safety. International cooperation, including capacity-building and technology transfer, is crucial to our endeavour. Brazil will be following attentively the discussions coordinated by the Secretary-General on the establishment of a fund for road safety.

Draft resolution A/70/L.44 will send a strong political message that we hope will be echoed at the World Health Assembly next May in Geneva and at the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, to be held in October in Quito. Together, those processes provide the mandates and sense of urgency needed to achieve the ambitious targets of the Decade of Action for Road Safety and of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**Ms. Power** (United States of America): I would also like to thank Ambassador Churkin for his personal leadership on this issue and for the steady, determined commitment of the Russian Federation to shine a spotlight on this serious problem, and to urge all nations to help solve it. The United States is proud to co-sponsor the critically important draft resolution A/70/L.44. We urge every Member State not only to adopt it, but to translate its commitments into practice through concrete public policy efforts.

Road crashes kill roughly 1.2 million people every year. Pause and think about that — approximately 1,200,000 individuals killed every single year. That is more people than are citizens of 40 States Members of the United Nations — year after year — for reasons both predictable and preventable.

Those losses are not equally distributed around the globe. Low- and middle-income nations are particularly hard-hit. Although home to just over half of the world's vehicles, those nations account for 90 per cent of all traffic deaths. It is for good reason that the Sustainable Development Goals include a specific target for global road safety among the health goals.

Perhaps even more shocking is the people who are disproportionately affected. Road deaths are by far the leading cause of death for young people ages 15 to 29 around the world. The General Assembly regularly debates serious threats to human life; this issue clearly must be treated as one of them. And the cost is not only felt in lives lost, but in the consequences for development. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that an estimated 3 per cent of global gross domestic product is lost to road traffic deaths and injuries.

As we pass the halfway point of the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020, we can point to some progress. The number of annual deaths has remained roughly consistent since 2007, even as the world's population continues to increase by around 1.1 per cent every year, which currently amounts to an increase of around 80 million people per year. Since 2010, 79 countries have seen a decrease in the number of road deaths. But at the same time, 68 other nations have seen

a rise in road deaths. No one should feel satisfied with the progress. We have to do better.

What more can we do? Many of the deaths can be prevented by improvements in legislation, road design, traffic management, safety equipment, emergency response and human behaviour. Simply using a seat belt reduces serious and fatal injuries by 40 to 65 per cent. Drivers, in particular those who drive drunk, drugged, drowsy or distracted, are a central part of this problem. The threat of distraction is particularly urgent, because in virtually every one of our countries there simply is not sufficient recognition of the dangers of driving while texting, calling or otherwise not paying full attention on the road.

Consider this: the average time a driver takes his or her eyes off the road while texting is five seconds. If the driver is driving 55 miles an hour for five seconds — or roughly 89 kilometres per hour — and is looking at his or her phone, he or she will cover roughly the length of an entire soccer field in that five seconds effectively blind. If we think about how reckless it would be to close one's eyes for five seconds at a time while driving, we start to get a sense for how dangerous it is to text at the wheel.

A 2014 study found that at any given moment during the day in the United States, more than 587,000 vehicles were being driven by someone who was using a cell phone at the same time. The results are predictably deadly. That same year, 3,179 people in this country were killed, and 431,000 others were injured, in collisions involving distracted drivers. At least one in 10 fatal crashes in this country — and nearly one in five injury crashes — involve a distracted driver.

As Governments and societies, we are beginning to wake up to the gravity of the threat. According to WHO, 139 countries have approved laws that prohibit the use of handheld phones while driving. Here in the United States we have convened two national distracted-driving summits, banned texting and cell-phone use for commercial drivers, encouraged States to adopt tough laws and launched multiple campaigns to raise public awareness about the dangers and human costs of distracted driving. We have designated this month, April, as national Distracted Driving Awareness Month, and have launched a new public-awareness campaign and law-enforcement crackdown. Still, given the numbers and the tragedies, we can and must do more.

Here is one lesson we have learned: the most compelling advocates in convincing people of the dangers of distracted driving are often the victims. I would like to conclude by telling the Assembly the quick story of one of those individuals.

In 2008, Jacy Good was driving home to Lancaster, Pennsylvania with her parents from her college graduation ceremony when their car was struck head-on by a tractor trailer. Both of Jacy's parents were killed, and she suffered critical injuries. Doctors gave her a 10 per cent chance of making it through the first night. The accident was caused by a distracted driver talking on his cell phone.

But Jacy somehow beat the odds and survived, and while the event left her partially paralysed and with minor lingering cognitive issues, it has also made her into a powerful advocate for educating people about the dangers of distracted driving and the need to adopt reforms to address this deadly problem. Since 2011, when she and her husband, Steve, founded an organization dedicated to this issue — an organization called HangUpAndDrive.com — Jacy has spoken at nearly 600 events in 32 States.

Texting while driving is a global killer, one that disproportionately affects our young people. We must do a better job of treating it that way. If we do, and if we bring the energy, innovation and commitment that we see in partners like Jacy Good, we can save millions of lives.

**Lord Robertson** (United Kingdom): It is a great honour for me once again to represent the United Kingdom in the General Assembly at this meeting on global road safety. I would like to thank the Government of the United Kingdom for giving me, an opposition politician, the opportunity to speak today on behalf of the Government.

Last September, in this Hall, the Sustainable Development Goals were adopted by the world's Governments. For the very first time, global goals such as these included a road safety target, a clear and unambiguous target to halve road-traffic fatalities by 2020. In Brazil, last November, many of us gathered at the high-level conference on road safety to set the agenda for delivering on this global target and to adopt the Brasilia Declaration. More than 70 ministers and 2,000 representatives participated in the Conference. Speaking at the closing ceremony, I described the Declaration as a manifesto for change, and it is a

great pleasure to see so much of the change that was proposed in Brasilia included in the draft resolution we will formally adopt here today.

The draft resolution urges all Governments to display leadership and cooperation and calls on donors to support a new global fund. It issues a clear moral challenge to all the world's car makers to meet essential and inarguable minimum United Nations safety standards by 2020. It highlights the appalling toll of child and adolescent casualties and calls on countries to meet their obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, established to protect our young. It recognizes the need to design and manage highways and city streets to be safe for all, makes the vital link between safe mobility and environmental protection and demonstrates why road safety must be at the heart of the new urban agenda to be agreed on later this year at the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development.

This is a draft resolution that can help us to deliver change. But we will succeed only if we resolve together to turn the words on its pages into action on our streets. And we must act now because, as Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron has said,

> "Every six seconds, someone is killed or seriously injured on the world's roads. Addressing this must be an urgent priority for the international community."

The United Kingdom is responding to the Sustainable Development Goals. In December, the Government published a new road-safety policy statement, adopting a safe-system approach and setting out how it will deliver an election manifesto commitment to reducing road traffic deaths every year. The United Kingdom's policy statement references the United Nations Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020 as an organizing framework. It sets out a clear plan for driving down casualties, through measures that include the protection of vulnerable road users; tough enforcement of speeding and drunken driving; and encouraging a faster uptake of safer vehicles. In order to improve infrastructure safety, the Highways England organization is now aiming for zero, with the goal of ensuring that by 2020, 90 per cent of travel on its strategic network will be on roads with a safety assessment of three or more stars. In solidarity with the global effort, the United Kingdom Department for International Development is funding the World Bank's Global Road Safety Facility, helping to catalyse a local response in low-income countries with high levels of road traffic carnage.

I am very proud that the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile Foundation, the independent United Kingdom charity that I chair, is at the forefront of campaigning and collaborative funding to tackle the global epidemic of road death and injury. Our Foundation has helped to establish and finance two other United Kingdom charities, the International Road Assessment Programme and the Global New Car Assessment Programme, which are now working with dozens of countries across the world to improve infrastructure and vehicle safety. We are providing strong support to the United Nations Special Envoy for Road Safety, Mr. Jean Todt, who spoke earlier, and to his high-level efforts to secure unprecedented financing for road safety. And we are excited about working with UNICEF and other global and national partners on a new child-health initiative with the aim of achieving the vision that every child can enjoy a safe and healthy journey to school.

We are doing this because if we are to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, we must be ambitious, and we have to succeed. We must succeed for Lavna, a 14-year-old girl killed by a lorry as she walked to school in London on the same day that we met in Brasilia. We must succeed for Sammy, struck down and killed at the age of 13 while walking to school here in New York City. And we must succeed for Maria, an 11-year-old girl from Brazil who wrote a prizewinning essay for a school road-safety competition. In her essay, Maria said,

> "You should have love for life, your life and others' as well. I believe that if all drivers thought this way then certainly many children would still have their parents and many parents would still have their children."

Just 10 months after she wrote those words, Maria and her father were killed when their motorbike was hit by a car.

We can therefore resolve here today that the loss of those young lives will mean something. We can resolve here today that there will be no more excuses or delays for delivering the solutions that we know can work and prevent more unnecessary deaths. We now have the new Sustainable Development Goals, which include the very ambitious target of halving road casualties in the

next five years. So many lives are at stake. We cannot afford to fail. So let us approve today's draft resolution and then work together to deliver the change that the world so desperately needs.

**Mr. Belin** (Sweden): Sweden aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union.

Sweden welcomes the General Assembly's forthcoming adoption by consensus of draft resolution A/70/L.44, entitled "Improving global road safety", and we would like to thank the Russian Federation for its leadership and efforts to facilitate it.

Road traffic injuries are a global public health problem that needs the global attention of which today's draft resolution is an expression. Fifty years ago, Sweden's traffic casualties peaked at around 17 fatalities per 100,000 inhabitants; since then, that number has fallen to less than three per 100,000. That trend is one of the reasons why a country like Sweden has adopted Vision Zero and can seriously consider the possibility of developing a safe system for all road users.

To get where we are now has been a long and winding journey and our knowledge and competence have grown along the way. One important thing we have learned from experience is that systematic and effective road-safety work must be holistic. We have to work on all the aspects of the system, such as road infrastructure, the urban environment, speed limits and vehicle design, together with aspects of the system's use, such as speeding, drinking and driving, and wearing seat belts and helmets. Another thing we have learned is that road safety is complex and multisectoral. We need to involve various stakeholders at the international, regional, national and local levels, such as Governments, the private sector, municipalities and non-governmental organizations, because all of them influence different aspects of the road transport system.

In order to develop every part of the road system and to get all stakeholders to work for the same goals, we need both a long-term vision of a safe system and short-term targets and indicators for managing progress. Based on its experience with this, Sweden fully supports target 3.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals, but we would also like to highlight target 11.2 and its impact on road safety. Road traffic injuries are one important aspect of sustainability. People need to walk, ride bikes, drive and commute by public transport. That should never be associated with the risk of being killed or seriously injured.

The progress Sweden has made in road safety would not have been possible without help from the international community. We therefore welcome the upcoming adoption of draft resolution A/70/L.44 and further international collaboration in this field.

**Mr. Roet** (Israel): I almost did not make it here today. As I was driving to this meeting in the terrible New York traffic, almost in a rage, I remembered what I was coming here to do and how calm we have to be on the road.

At the outset, let me thank the World Health Organization for its leadership role on this life-saving issue and the Russian Federation for leading the negotiations on draft resolution A/70/L.44.

Israel has long been committed to promoting road safety. That is why we speak at this meeting every year. This issue has been, and still is, one of our national priorities.

The year 2015 was a landmark year for development. Member States reached historic agreements, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Today, in 2016, we will begin implementing the commitments we made to future generations. When it comes to road safety, the 2030 Agenda has set the ambitious goals of halving the global number of deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents by 2020 and providing access to safe, affordable and sustainable transport systems for all by 2030.

The challenges before us are daunting. Road transportation is at the heart of our societies and is the lifeblood of our economies. Yet every year 1.25 million people die, 50 million are injured in road-related incidents and many suffer long-term or permanent disabilities. Those accidents are tragedies for the victims and their families, but they also have serious socioeconomic consequences. That is especially true for low-income countries, where 90 per cent of the world's fatalities on the road occur, despite having only 50 per cent of the world's vehicles.

Crashes deprive families of their primary breadwinners or force them to contend with expensive medical care. When that happens, families are plunged into a crippling cycle of poverty. According to the World Bank, road crashes cost the Governments of

developing countries an estimated 1 to 5 per cent of their gross domestic products. Therefore, by saving lives on the road we are also fighting poverty and boosting prosperity.

The Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety provides clarity and areas of focus for national authorities seeking to improve domestic road safety. That will help to stabilize, and ultimately reduce, the forecasted level of global road fatalities. Progress has already been made. In that regard, it is worth mentioning the increasing activities of regional organizations, such as the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, to improve road safety among their members.

*Mr. Cardi (Italy), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

Israel has discovered that even seemingly simple actions can make a difference. Our Government has been working to change the driving culture in Israel through marketing strategies and campaigns, including by displaying billboards that read "Think Life!". A previous campaign reminded us that, on the road, we do not always have to prove that we are right, but instead we should choose to act wisely. Israel's National Road Safety Authority promotes regulations and policies, prepares driver education programmes and has a close working relationship with other branches of Government, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) dedicated to road safety.

Those actions enable us to reach out to all sectors of society, including those sectors that historically have a higher rate of traffic incidents than the general population. The National Road Safety Authority also encourages the development of intelligent transportation systems. Through the integration of computers and information technologies into vehicles and infrastructure, intelligent transportation systems enable transportation authorities, transport providers and private road users to make better informed, safer and more intelligent decisions. The result is significantly enhanced efficiency of the use of resources and time, which contributes to protecting the environment. One example of such lifesaving technologies has been developed by the Israeli company Mobileye. This innovative company has created a vision-based advanced system that provides warnings for collision prevention and mitigation. Those are a few of the steps we in Israel have taken on the path towards road safety, but we will continue to pursue policies and encourage innovation to keep making our roads safer.

Road traffic deaths and injuries are preventable. The efforts of Governments, NGOs and the private sector will help to ensure that we meet the goals set forth in the Decade of Action and the road safety-related targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Together, we can make roads safer and our people more secure. The Jewish tradition teaches us that whenever someone saves one life, it is as if he saved the entire world. Let us unite to save the world one life at a time.

**Mr. Lamek** (France) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of France, I would like to thank the President for having convened this meeting, as well as to commend the Russian delegation for having prepared and facilitated the negotiations on draft resolution A/70/L.44, to be adopted by the General Assembly today. I also wish to commend the work of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Jean Todt, and to thank him for his commitment to road safety.

We align ourselves with the statement made on behalf of the European Union and its member States.

With more than two deaths and 100 injuries per second worldwide due to road accidents, many involving children and young people, it is urgent to act and implement the 10 basic steps recommended by the World Health Organization in order to halve the number of deaths and injuries on the roads by 2020, as we collectively committed ourselves to doing here in the Hall in September 2015 (see A/70/PV.4).

Since the launch of the Decade of Action for Road Safety, the relatively stable statistics on global population growth and on the number of vehicles is a source of hope. Lives have been saved, in particular with the adoption by 17 additional countries of laws mitigating the risk factors for road accidents, including bans on drunk driving and laws requiring the wearing of helmets. We must continue along that path.

For France, leaving no one behind is an important initiative to save 2,000 additional lives on the roads. The past indicates that such a result is within our reach. Over the course of the decade from 2001 to 2010, France went from more than 8,000 killed in 2001 to fewer than 4,000 in 2010, and in 2014 the number was 3,384. We could not have achieved that result if political will at the highest level had not been put forth in 2002.

That commitment has paid off and has not wavered in recent years.

A close monitoring of statistics should enable us to adapt our actions. In response to the uptick in fatalities from 2014 to 2015, the French Government implemented an emergency plan of 26 measures, including combating the dangers of using telephones while driving; drinking and driving for young drivers; and speeding, through the use of a new type of independent radars that provides better results.

Leaving no one behind also means tackling this scourge in areas where road accidents represent a disproportionate burden. Developing countries suffer approximately 90 per cent of deaths in the world, while road traffic deaths in Africa are three times greater than in Europe. Hence, since 2009, France has been firmly committed to the implementation of the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety, as illustrated by the commemoration, each year since 2010, of a Francophone day for road safety. France is also strengthening its bilateral ties with countries such as Algeria, Senegal and Lebanon via agreements that promote the exchange of good practices.

The Secretary-General's third report (A/70/386) since the beginning of the Decade of Action for Road Safety illustrates the multitude of actions undertaken. I therefore welcome the commitment of all actors engaged in this fight, the World Health Organization, the Economic Commission for Europe and the entire United Nations system — all of which, in collaboration with Governments, non-governmental organizations and civil society in its entire, do considerable work.

Just as in Brasilia, France will continue to play its part in this mobilization in the service of all, in particular the most vulnerable, ensuring that no one is left behind. I am sure that these synergies will result in significant progress, thereby saving millions of lives on our planet.

**Ms. Girón Tomás** (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome draft resolution A/70/L.44, on improving global road safety (A/70/L.44), which is an example of outstanding international cooperation in joining the efforts of all Governments and public and private actors to reduce the road traffic accident rate.

In line with international standards and as part of its national public and private initiatives, Spain has appreciably improved road safety. We have noted a cumulative decrease in road traffic deaths between 1989 and 2014 of 82 per cent. In our experience, improving road safety is entirely possible through a defined road safety policy strategy focused on the five road safety risk factors that have been identified at the international level. Of course, a number of technological advantages have been of use, but above all international cooperation among all countries through international organizations at the regional and global levels has been important. Spain has good experience in that area, a good example being our collaborative work with our Latin American colleagues, to whom we will always be grateful for placing their trust in our joint work.

Finally, we would also like to thank the Special Envoy for Road Safety for his excellent leadership and all the support he has given to the road safety initiatives recently developed at the global level. But above all, looking to the future, we should improve road safety globally through cooperation with all actors, both in the public and private actors. Ultimately, we are all citizens.

**The Acting President**: In accordance with resolution 49/2, of 19 October 1994, I now call on the Observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

**Mr. Watson** (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): I would like to thank the President for the opportunity to provide a brief statement on behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

The IFRC first recognized road safety as a humanitarian crisis in its *World Disasters Report 1998*. Since that time, it has worked alongside its Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to undertake a variety of actions to enhance global road safety. For example, our national societies are widely recognized for the first-aid services and training they provide. In addition, many are actively involved in working with their authorities to develop evidence-based road safety laws and policies, as well as delivering on-the-ground road safety initiatives. Those efforts are supported by our hosted programme, the Global Road Safety Partnership, which works to establish partnerships with Government, the private sector and civil society organizations in order to enhance road safety — in particular in lower- and middle-income countries, where the need is greatest.

We are now at the midpoint of the Decade of Action for Road Safety, and considerable progress has been

made to address this man-made crisis. In that regard, the IFRC would like to commend all those who contributed to the establishment of the Decade of Action and have worked tirelessly to achieve its goals. More recently, the inclusion of truly ambitious road safety targets in the Sustainable Development Goals, the Secretary-General's appointment of a Special Envoy for Road Safety and the organization of the second Global High-level Conference on Road Safety, in Brazil, have provided much-needed political impetus for further global action. However, so much more still needs to be done, and policies must now be put into effect.

While the latest data from the World Health Organization suggests that road fatalities have stabilized at 1.25 million per year, the human and economic costs of road crashes remain staggering. From a humanitarian perspective, the risk of death or injury on the road remains ever-present in many communities around the world. For example, there are cities and towns where vehicles travel at up to 100 kilometres per hour through school zones because the road police have no authority or resources to prevent it. There are also cities and towns where injured road users are provided with no assistance due to a lack of legal protection for good samaritans in their country, and where adults and children falling from motorbikes suffer life-altering head injuries because they are either not required to wear a helmet or have access only to substandard helmets that offer little protection. Events like that happen every day — and are happening right now all over the world. The reality is that, if you are poor or if you live in a rapidly motorizing country, you are likely to experience road trauma at first hand.

Changes need to occur at the local, national and global levels if we are going to achieve our ambitious road safety goals. Of particular importance is the need to build strong multisectoral and multi-stakeholder partnerships. In that regard, we welcome draft resolution A/70/L.44, which lays out clear actions for Member States, United Nations agencies and other relevant stakeholders. In particular, we support the call for Governments to pass and implement strong road safety policies that are locally relevant and evidence-based. To maximize their effectiveness, such policies should be consistently and uniformly enforced and adequately resourced. More broadly, there is a need for more attention, political will and resources to be devoted to road safety.

For its part, the IFRC will continue to work with all our member States and relevant organizations to realize the goals of the draft resolution. Achieving ambitious road safety targets will not only benefit society as a whole, but will in particular assist the poorest and most vulnerable among us, ensuring that no one is left behind.

**The Acting President**: We have heard the last speaker in this debate on this item.

The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/70/L.44, entitled "Improving global road safety".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Mr. Botnaru** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/70/L.44: Andorra, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Japan, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan, the United Arab Emirates, the United States of America and Uruguay.

**The Acting President**: May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/70/L.44?

*Draft resolution A/70/L.44 was adopted* (resolution 70/260).

**The Acting President**: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 13?

*It was so decided.*

**Agenda item 23** (*continued*)

**Groups of countries in special situations**

**(a) Follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries**

**Draft resolution (A/70/L.45)**

**The Acting President**: The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/70/L.45, entitled

"Modalities for the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020".

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/70/L.45?

*Draft resolution A/70/L.45 was adopted* (resolution 70/261).

**The Acting President**: I call on the representative of Thailand, who wishes to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted. I recall that explanations of position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Ms. Chartsuwan** (Thailand): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. At the outset, please allow me to express the appreciation of the Group of 77 and China to the core facilitators for their const uctive guidance, relentless efforts and unwavering patience during the course of negotiations on the very important resolution 70/261.

The Group would like also to thank our delegations for their constructive engagement and the flexibility shown during the negotiation of the resolution. With 47 of 48 countries officially listed as least developed countries being members of the Group of 77, we cannot overemphasize the importance of the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 for the Group. It is crucial that the upcoming Midterm Review be inclusive in nature, not only in the sense of full-scale State participation, but also with regard to the active and constructive participation of the relevant stakeholders. In that way we may determine the future path of genuine partnership that will enable least developed countries to graduate from least developed country status. In our view, the adoption of these modalities is only the beginning of the process of ensuring that the Midterm Review encapsulates the commitments we made during the course of 2015 to provide a meaningful outcome that will yield enablers key to the successful implementation of those commitments by least developed countries.

The Group of 77 and China looks forward to actively, constructively and substantively engaging with the co-facilitators and all members and observer States in the deliberations on, and the negotiation of, the draft outcome document for the Midterm Review in the lead up to the conference to be held at the end of May.

**The Acting President**: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 23.

*The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.*